

1) Modern philosophy has to admit the limitation of philosophy, it cannot maintain the possibility of refuting revelation, whereas classical philosophy does not admit this limitation of philosophy and it does maintain the possibility of refuting revelation. Why? 2) Classical philosophy implies natural theology—it does not suspend judgment on God, as the “critical” or “positive” philosophy of modern times must. It is true, modern philosophy prior to Kant had natural theology and attacked sometimes, on the basis of that natural theology, revelation. But: the classical concept of natural theology differs from the traditional and modern one as follows—it consists of two parts: a) elaboration of what “God” means—antedates philosophy proper, is practically identical with fundamental reflection of philosophy; b) demonstration of existence of God—as the culmination of philosophy. a) question of right life—σοφία [wisdom]—idea of σοφός [wise one]: the σοφός’ [wise one’s] pity for the μωροί [fools], no strict demands on them, indifference to them — connection between love and need → God ens perfectissimus [most perfect being] = sapientissimus [most wise] cannot be the God of the Bible.

God of the Bible presupposes cosmic significance of man’s conduct—a fantastic, if intelligible, presupposition. b) since rejection of revelation precedes philosophy, it does not determine the structure and task of philosophy—it does not compel philosophy to be dogmatic—modern philosophy wants to exclude *a priori* the possibility that there is place left for revelation → system: identity of φύσει πρώτα [first things by nature] with πρώτα πρὸς ἡμᾶς [first things for us] (idea Dei [idea of God] = origins and foundations totius naturæ sunt notissimæ [of the whole nature are most knowable]). For classical philosophy, the argument against revelation was the actual life of investigation, not any specific arguments which could always be questioned.

(Leo Strauss Papers, box 16, folder 11)

The reflection leading to realization of fundamental character of αἰσθητά [perceptibles] disposes of the religious problem. This reflection is pre-philosophic, in so far as in it and through it the constitution of philosophy takes place. More precisely: it excludes the possibility of asserting theism on any but theoretical grounds, i.e. on any grounds other than the teleological character of the φύσει ὄντα [beings by nature]. By its analysis of the ἀνθρώπινα [human things], it excludes the moral and the “existential” grounds. The fundamental (and hidden) reflection of the classics is something like a critique of practical reason as in any way justifying “postulates.”

(box 18, folder 2.)